



NEWS RELEASE

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USAID CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER VISITS MINDANAO

Alonzo Fulgham, Chief Operating Officer of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), will visit General Santos City and Sarangani as part of a six-day trip to the Philippines. Mindanao, a region in which the U.S. Government has numerous programs to support economic growth and development and alleviate poverty, was high on the visit's list to conduct meetings and hold discussions with key officials.

While in General Santos City, Mr. Fulgham will inaugurate the USAID-funded Bajunaid Barangay Bridge. In Malapatan, Sarangani, the Biao Barangay Bridge will likewise be turned over in a ribbon-cutting ceremony that will include former MNLF combatants.

"Inaugurating and handing over a bridge for use by the local residents is significant. But to co-inaugurate a development project with former combatants is most heartening as this is the core of what the U.S. Government and USAID wants to accomplish. These represent what we have been working so hard for, for so long, giving people a reason to build rather than a reason to destroy," according to Mr. Fulgham.

Alonzo Fulgham is not a stranger to conducting development aid efforts in conflict-affected areas. He served as USAID's Mission Director to Afghanistan from June 2005 to July 2006, managing the United States Government's second largest development and nation-building program in the world and heading development and humanitarian assistance programs that provided a foundation for real human progress and market-led growth.

"The United States looks forward to our continued friendship and cooperation in our efforts to facilitate economic development and poverty alleviation and help create conditions for peace in Mindanao. These efforts will bring tremendous rewards to both of our nations," said Fulgham.

Mr. Fulgham also looks forward to meeting with the Governors of Sarangani and South Cotabato, the Mayor of General Santos, Heads of the Chambers of Commerce and to visiting USAID's Domingo Teng Fishing Industry Family Health Program.

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